

# W A L W O R T H A C A D E M Y (Site)

## HISTORY SHEET

### General Information & References

Name of Structure: Walworth Academy

Address: 3655 High St

Parcel ID: (544400) 63114-15-654378 (Dist 1, Lot 10)

Atlas: 1853 "Academy"; 1858 "Walworth Academy"; 1874 "Academy";  
1904 "School"

When Built / Mason: 1841

When Razed: 1930

Why: 1929 School Dist #1 approved bond issue to erect new school building

Original Owner: Academy trustees

Subsequently: Walworth Grange (1877 purchased)

Original Use: (1841-1856) Academy for instruction

(1857-1877) Boarding home & residence for the principal

(1877-1930) Walworth Grange

Subsequently: Grange until razed

Photographs: Yes

Description:

#### Design Details:

2-story Greek Revival rectangular configuration. Center entrance on gable end which faced the road was flanked with one 6-over-6 window on each side; similar windows were centered above the lower openings. Date stone above door. Pillars abutted the sidelights on the door and intersected with the limestone lintel. Stone pilasters in corners in lieu of quoins. The entablature had three belly windows; no windows or fanlight in the pediment above it. The cornice on the long sides were the same width as the entablature without any belly windows. All windows had limestone lintels and sills and there was a limestone watertable. The long sides each appear to have had 8 windows—4 on the lower story with 4 centered above them

#### Masonry Details:

Very small lakestones were set in very neat uniform rows. There were no quoins and the only known photographs are taken from a distance such that details about mortar and pointing cannot be ascertained. The structure rested on a stone block foundation necessitating 6 or 7 risers to enter.

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#### Overview

The cobblestone Academy building was erected in 1841. It was constructed of lake stone at a cost of \$4000 on Academy St. It had two departments and accommodated 100 students.

Entry requirements for the Academy included an equivalent to an 8th grade education. Many students boarded at the school or with families in town. Many students walked 5 or 6 miles one way to attend school.

In 1857 a larger building was needed and a 3-story brick structure was erected to the east of the cobblestone building. The original building was then used as a boarding hall, church, residence for the principal, and the Grange Hall. The majority of the students lived nearby or were "basket boarders" who brought food and resided with a family in town during the school week.<sup>1</sup>

In 1877 the Walworth Grange rented the cobblestone Walworth Academy building and remodeled the second floor into meeting rooms. The total cost of repairing and furnishing the hall amounted to \$138.71; they had to go into debt for part of this amount. A few years later the first floor was remodeled into a dining room and kitchen. There was a fire escape leading from an Academy window to a door on the third floor of the old school building.<sup>2</sup>

In 1929 voters of District #1 approved a bond issue to erect a new school building. On March 1, 1930 demolition of both the cobblestone and the brick school buildings commenced.

#### Epilogue

In 1980 the final school on the site closed and the building sat vacant for 5 years. In 1985 it was rehabbed into 26 low-income apartments, but the project was not successful and the site again sat vacant for decades. The building was eventually condemned. The walls and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://walworthhistoricalsociety.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/WHS-2014-05-newsletter.pdf> WHS May 2014 Newsletter (pages 1-5) EXCELLENT COMPLETE STORY OF THE WALWORTH ACADEMY school and site over the years, provided the bulk of content in this history sheet.

<sup>2</sup> <http://walworthhistoricalsociety.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/WHS-2015-09-Newsletter.pdf> WHS September 2015 Newsletter (page 4)

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part of the roof facing the west collapsed in March 2010. The windows and doors were boarded, the building was declared unsafe for occupancy, and the parking lot was chained off. Over the weekend of April 11-14, 2014 the building was finally demolished.

In 2018 Walworth Gateway Apartments<sup>3</sup> opened. It's designed as a senior living community.

### References

Surprisingly, the Walworth Academy building itself was rarely (if ever) reported in newspapers of its day. It is mainly referenced in obituary notices. The following is a relevant excerpt from the 4/13/2014 *Lake Shore News* reporting about the recent demolition of the third school building on the site and the history of the school buildings that once were there. This article is not available on the internet.

" ... the first Academy building was erected in 1841. The school was constructed of lake stone at a cost of \$4,000 on Academy Street in Walworth. (Postal address was 3655 High Street, corner of Academy St).

The Academy was similar to a high school; entry requirement was a preliminary certificate, which was equivalent to an eighth grade education. Many of the Academy students boarded at the school or with families in town. Students who lived nearby walked, rode horseback, or drove a carriage—depending on the time of year and distance. Many students walked 5 or 6 miles one way to attend school.

In 1857 a large building was needed and a three-story brick structure was erected to the east of the first Academy. The older building was then used as a boarding home and residence for the principal.

In 1877, the original Academy was sold to the Walworth Grange and used as a Grange Hall. The second floor was remodeled into meeting rooms and a few years later the first floor was made into a dining room and kitchen.

... until 1929, when voters in District #1 approved a bond issue of \$80,000 for the purpose of erecting a new school building. On March 1, 1930, demolition of both buildings began to make way for the "Walworth High School" building.

When the Walworth High School opened on September 8, 1930 the enrollment was 182 students. The building ceased to be a school in 1949 with their last graduating class."

KC: After years of abandonment and neglect the third and final school building on the site was finally torn down in April 2014. The site has been redeveloped into apartments.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://walworthhistoricalsociety.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/A-Walking-Tour-of-Walworth-3-2019-.pdf> A Walking Tour of the Walworth, New York Hamlet